

Town of Camden
Community & Economic Development Advisory Committee Agenda (CEDAC)

Monday, April 25, 2011, 5:30 PM
Washington St. Conference Room

Meeting Attendees and Notes

Attendees

- CEDAC and Liaison: Peter Gross (Chair), Jim Fullilove, Martin Cates, Lowrie Sargent, Brian Hodges, Rick Bates John Arnold
- Public: Pete Brown, Nancy Caudle-Johnson, Susan Howland

Notes

1. Minutes of 3/21/11, 3/28/11 & 4/11/11 meetings were approved.
2. Guest discussion with Susan Howland, Wayfarer Marine - Brian introduced Susan Howland, CEO and CFO of Wayfarer Marine. Susan was invited to address the CEDAC as part of the committee's continuing effort to better understand the challenges entrepreneurs faced in doing business in Camden.

Wayfarer employs about 45 full-time year-round skilled employees and 12-15 seasonal workers. A key Wayfarer goal is to employ more skilled employees. Susan is seeking to do this by attracting more in depth recreational boat refit work. The cost of doing business on the waterfront in Camden is a key concern in attracting this business. These costs include taxes such as property tax and permitting fees such as submerged land lease. Other Maine yards in similar business lines don't face the same level of costs. Other hurdles include boat storage space, real estate costs.

The 2008 recession has hurt Wayfarer's business. Boat work and dockings have dropped since then. Rising fuel prices also hamper business. Bookings for this year are down.

Wayfarer's business is good for Camden. Boat owners and their crews come from all over the world to use their facilities. When they are here they shop, lodge, eat, and provision their boat in Camden. Occasionally they buy homes here also. Camden is a pleasant place to visit and have your boat refurbished. This fact may partially off-set the additional cost of doing business here.

To attract more business Wayfarer is making a greater effort to market its services to the Caribbean area. Caribbean boats need to sail north of Newport, RI during the hurricane season for insurance purposes.

Wayfarer also needs to use their Route one facility more effectively for boat storage and work.

Wayfarer has achieved Pine Tree Zone certification with the State of Maine which has recently determined that boat refit is equivalent to boat construction.

Wayfarer is considering apprentice programs to bring in younger workers and teach them.

3. Discussion and vote of support of the P&S agreement with Camden Studios – Deferred until 5/9 meeting.
4. TIF refresher mini-course with Brian Hodges – Brian provided a condensed review of the Camden Downtown Municipal Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and Camden Business Highway Municipal TIF Districts. He circulated condensed versions of both approved documents. The documents are available at Brian's office. TIF funds when accrued can be used for the projects listed in the TIF documents. TIF funds are meant to be used and not accumulated for some large project.

Brian plans to review both documents in greater detail and provide recommendations going forward to the CEDAC.

5. Potential new initiatives
 - a. Zoning review to support business growth – Brian has noticed that zoning restrictions in areas like the Wayfarer Route One storage yard and the Town Sagamore Farms area restrict suitable development and use of these areas. Brian suggested that the CEDAC work with the planning board to revisit zoning in these areas.
 - b. Credit Enhancement TIF policy – Brian outlined the role of a credit enhancement agreement with TIFs in attracting development. This gives the Town the option of reimbursing a percentage of property tax payments for a company that commits to development that enhances the Town or provides jobs that do so. The actual credit enhancement agreement with a TIF is site and development specific and must be approved by vote of the Town and the Maine Department of Economic & Community Development. A credit enhancement policy would outline the approach of the Town to this use of TIF funds. This policy would be helpful to potential business developers. A credit enhancement agreement as part of a TIF could be used by existing businesses for new development or new businesses to Town. Brian will be researching this further and provide more information to the CEDAC.
6. Miscellaneous reports
 - Brian will be working with Justin Holmes on the area website.

- The Mid-coast Economic Development District will be meeting at 6 PM on Thursday, April 28, at the Knox County Courthouse in Rockland
- The next joint meeting with REDAC and Rockport has been delayed until May 26

7. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at about 7:37 PM